

News release

Vaccination Mandate Covers Healthcare, Long-Term Care Workers, Paramedics, Teachers, Others

[COVID - 19 \(../search?dept=180\)](#) / [Health and Wellness \(../search?dept=134\)](#)
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Tens of thousands of Nova Scotians working in healthcare and education must be vaccinated under a new COVID-19 vaccine mandate announced today, September 29.

“Despite having a highly vaccinated population, the pandemic is still having deadly consequences in the fourth wave,” said Premier Tim Houston. “There have been three deaths in the last week alone and we need to do whatever we can to make sure other families don’t have to grieve their loved ones. Too many Nova Scotians have chosen not to get vaccinated, and some of them work with Nova Scotians most at risk from COVID-19. It is time to get tough.”

The new vaccine mandate applies to:

- Nova Scotia Health Authority and IWK Health Centre
- workers in long-term care facilities (licensed and unlicensed) and home-care agencies (publicly and privately funded)
- public school teachers, pre-primary and other school-based staff, regional and board office staff, and those providing services in schools, including cafeteria and school bus services
- Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia
- workers in residential facilities and day programs funded by the Department of Community Services Disability Support Program and adult day programs funded by Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care
- workers in Department of Community Services facilities and those providing placements for children and youth in the care of the Minister of Community Services (excluding foster family placements)

- paramedics, LifeFlight nurses and some other staff at EHS
- physicians and other service providers to the above organizations; for example hairdressers and contractors

“Our vaccination rate is not increasing as fast as we need, and we are seeing the impact of the fourth wave on those who are vaccinated and unvaccinated. There are thousands of appointments available for vaccination right now. Don’t wait – book today,” said Dr. Robert Strang, Nova Scotia’s chief medical officer of health.

Employees must show proof of vaccination. If not fully vaccinated (zero or one dose), they must participate in a mandatory education program. They have until November 30 to be fully vaccinated.

If an employee is not fully vaccinated by November 30, they will be placed on unpaid administrative leave. Government will not provide employers with any additional funding to cover administrative leaves of absence related to vaccine status.

Full vaccination will be a hiring condition for new staff.

The vaccine mandate allows for a medical exception for staff who are unable to be vaccinated. However, the medical reasons required for an exception are very specific and limited. An exception letter can only be issued by a nurse practitioner or physician.

All workplaces are encouraged to develop their own vaccine policies.

Quotes:

“An individual’s personal decision not to get vaccinated has tangible implications – life and death consequences – for others. The Nova Scotia Nurses’ Union supports the advice of public health officials regarding mandatory vaccination policies.”

– *Janet Hazelton, president, Nova Scotia Nurses’ Union*

“Nationally 12 Unifor members have lost their lives to COVID-19 that was contracted in the workplace. Unifor fully understands the importance of mandatory vaccination policies guided by public health officials and experts to protect individuals and others around us.”

– *Linda MacNeil, Unifor Atlantic Regional Director*

Quick Facts:

- The new policy covers more than 80,000 employees
- 58,763 eligible people in Nova Scotia have not had any doses of the COVID-19 vaccine

Additional Resources:

Nova Scotia's COVID-19 webpage: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus>
(<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus>)

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